

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 SMI-01 CU-04 PA-02 PRS-01

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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8528

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS JERUSALEM 1697

PARIS FOR UNESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: UNESCO, IS

SUBJ: MAZAR'S JERUSALEM EXCAVATIONS REPORTED ENDING

1. SUMMARY: PRESS REPORTS DEC. 8 PROF. MAZAR'S EXCAVATION IN JERUSALEM ADJACENT TO TEMPLE MOUNT (HARAM ES SHARIF) ARE COMING TO AN END. AFTER 9 YEARS OF INTENSIVE DIGGING, FIELD WORK IS NOW COMING TO AN END AND MAZAR WILL BEGIN PUBLISHING PHASE. PRESS STATES ANNOUNCEMENT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH UNESCO RESOLUTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. FOR SOME TIME WE HAVE HEARD REPORTS WORKERS AT TEMPLE MOUNT EXCAVATIONS HAVE BEEN TOLD DIGGING WILL SOON BE COMPLETED AND THEY SHOULD PREPARE SEEK OTHER EMPLOYMENT. DEC. 8 JERUSALEM POST CARRIES STORY THAT EXCAVATION PHASE NEARING AN END AND WILL CEASE NEXT APRIL.

3. ACCOUNT SAY 9 YEARS OF INTENSIVE YEAR ROUND WORK HAS CLEARED 85 PERCENT OF 5 ACRE SITE. MAZAR WILL REPORTEDLY NOW BEGIN TO SORT LARGE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL WHICH HAS BEEN GATHERED IN PREPARATION FOR PUBLICATION PHASE. NEED OF SEPTUGENARIAN MAZAR TO REST AFTER PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL RIGORS OF EXTENDED EXCAVATION ALSO CITED ALONG WITH SHORTAGE

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OF FUNDS.

4. ARTICLE STATE NEW COMMITTEE UNDER YIGAL YADIN HAS BEEN SET UP TO DETERMINE FUTURE EXCAVATION IN OLD CITY. TWO POSSIBILITIES LISTED ARE AREA IN VICINITY OF WESTERN WALL PLAZA AND OPHEL (CITY OF DAVID) SOUTH OF TEMPLE MOUNT DIGS.

5. CONSUL GENERAL WAS RECENTLY TOLD BY PROF. AVIRAM OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY THAT EXPLORATION SHAFTS HAD BEEN SUNK IN OPHEL AREA WITH VIEW OF BEGINNING EXCAVATIONS. HOWEVER, ARCHEOLOGISTS HAD RUN INTO PROBLEM WITH RELIGIOUS AUTHORITIES WHO WERE OPPOSED TO DIGGING IN AREA WHICH MIGHT CONTAIN GRAVES FROM DAVIDIC PERIOD.

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